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Message Text

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43
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 EURE-00

DRC-01 OMB-01 /137 W
---------- 107404
P R 151822Z JAN 74
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7113
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AM **ASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, UK, PINT
SUBJECT: FAILURE OF*TUC-**ATH TALKS

REF: LONDON 0526

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE TUC-HEATH TALKS YESTERDAY (JAN. 14) FAILED TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK IN THE INDUSTRIAL CRISIS. THE PRIME MINISTER, ACCOMPANIED BY WHITELAW AND BARBER, MET WITH A TUC GROUP WHICH INCLUDED LEN MURRAY, ALF ALLEN, SIR SIDNEY GREENE, DAVID BASNETT, JACK JONES AND HUGH SCANLON. END SUMMARY
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2. THE BASIC PROBLEM WAS THAT HEATH AND HIS ASSOCIATES WERE UNABLE TO PERSUADE THE TUC TO PUT MORE FLESH TO THE SKELETON OF THEIR OFFER THAT OTHER UNIONS WOULD NOT CITE A MINERS' SETTLEMENT IN THEIR OWN NEGOTIATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT TEAM TRIED IN VAIN TO PERSUADE THE TUC LEADERSHIP TO MAKE A PLEDGE THAT IF THE MINERS WERE GIVEN SPECIAL TREATMENT OTHER UNIONS WOULD, IN FACT, SETTLE WITHIN STAGE THREE.

3. AFTER THE MEETING, MURRAY SAID THE OFFER WAS STILL ON THE TABLE AND WOULD BE PUT TO THE SPECIAL TUC CONFERENCE TOMORROW (JANUARY 16) OF PRESIDENTS AND GENERAL SECRETARIES (WHERE IT IS EXPECTED TO RECEIVE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT). THE GOVERNMENT, IN THE MEAN-WHILE, WILL AWAIT A DECISION OF THE TUC CONFERENCE BEFORE TAKING THE NEXT STEP.

4. (IN THE MEANWHILE, THERE WERE NO PASSENGER TRAINS AS THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN'S U*ION (ASLEF) CARRIED OUT ITS THREAT TO CALL A 24-HOUR STRIKE. NONETHELESS, THE UNION IS CONSIDERING AN OFFER BY BRITISH RAIL OF NEW PA DISCUSSIONS NEXT TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, IF ASLEF WILL END ALL ASPECTS OF ITS INDUSTRIAL ACTION.

5. COMMENT: DAVID BASNETT TOLD US TODAY THAT HE SAW VERY LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT THE TUC CONFERENCE TOMORROW WOULD ADD ANY MEAT TO THE BONES OF THE T*C FFER. ANOTHER TUC OFFICIAL INSISTS THAT THE TUC LEADERSHIP HAS GONE AS FAR AS IT CAN GO IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THAT ITS OFFER IS GENUINE, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT SIMPLY WANTS TO HAVE AN ELECTION DURING WHICH IT CAN BLAME THE MINERS' AND OTHER UNIONS FOR THE INDUSTRIAL CRISIS, WHILE THE THREE-DAY WEEK CONTINUES. FOR MANY OBSERVERS, TOMORROW'S TUC CONFERENCE WILL COME AS AN ANTI-CLIMAX IN A DRAMA FULLY PLAYED OUT.

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